



# Fire & Ice

A new look and understanding of the Pantheon of Northwest European Aesir & Vanir Deities and the complex Cosmology through which they move...

## ABSTRACT

The Author draws upon his considerable & unique knowledge of the Gods & Goddesses of the Scandinavian & Germanic peoples of Christian Europe to illuminate and expand the limited understanding of the Deities of Aesir & Vanir; and the complexities and nature of their Identities, positions, and roles...

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# Chapter II

# The

# HEATHEN CONCEPT

# of BEING:

## An Eddaic Understanding of the Creation Mythos

*The anthropological conception of the creation mythos and human existence contained in the Völuspa is as follows: Man consists of seven principal co-dynamic elements, beginning with the primal and coarser and ending with the highest and noblest:*

1. The earthly [inorganic] matter of which the body is composed.
2. A formative vegetative [organic] force.
3. First gifts of Loder/Lothar.
4. Second gift of Loder/Lothar.
5. Hœnir's gift.
6. Odin's/Wotan's gift.
7. Freya's Blessing

The *Völuspa* passages concerning this read:

16

...determined Syr spoke,  
at life's command,  
blessed are twain,  
these tasks performed.

17

...found on the land  
with little power,  
Ask [ash] and Embla [elm]  
without destiny.

18

Spirit they had not,  
“ódr” they had not,  
neither “lá” nor “læti,”  
nor the form of the gods.  
Spirit gave Odin,  
“ódr” gave Hœnir,  
“lá” gave Loder  
and also the form of the gods.

These states of matter begin with the first two primordial foundations, earthly [inorganic] material and the vegetative [organic] force. At this point Ask & Embla are no more than vegetation [growing trees]; which, as a matter of our contemporary understanding of the evolution of life on this world fits quite well—as vegetation (trees in fact) flourished millennia-long before mankind...

To this vegetative matter, Loder bestows the first high gifts of *lá* [meaning *blood*] and *læti* [meaning *the way in which a conscious being moves & acts*]; transforming Ask & Embla from vegetative state into a lively animated condition--*animals*...

Loder's Second high gift was *litr goda* ["good composition"]. Bear in mind that the Germanic/Norse, like the Greek-Hellenes and Romans, conceived their gods in human form, and that human characteristics originally belonged to the gods, and were fashioned by their gods before human creation. These said peoples understood mankind to be created *in effigiem deorum* or *litr goda*: "***in the likeness of gods.***" This concept can be more explicitly understood in the abstract that an *efni* [an empty form, resembling the gods] gave humans *shape* and *character* to the earthly body, which is visible to the eye. In brief, Loder gave Ask & Embla the same *shape* [not substance] as the gods, as opposed to the prior form of animals...

From Hœnir, Ask & Embla received the higher gift of *ódr*. This word corresponds most closely to the Latin *mens*, the Greek *nous*, and is defined as that material which forms the kernel of human personality [its *ego*] and whose manifestations are cognizance-of-self, understanding, memory, imagination, and will. These are conditions essential to the existence of every person.

From, Odin—highest of Aesir—adds the highest & noblest of his gifts to the nature of humans, *önd*<sup>1</sup>: ***spirit***, by which a human being becomes participator in the divine; not just in the representation of image and/or form. This gift is revealed in mankind as power of thought, courage, honesty, veracity, mercy, and the humility of composure in *accepting* those misfortunes which *cannot* be averted by human ingenuity; through *struggle* we *evolve and progress*...

Finally, Freya imparted her most powerful blessing upon Ask & Embla: fertility, and the magnificent power of procreation, ensuring their continuity throughout the ages and in fact their perpetuity, their continuation—*biological rebirth & immortality*.

These *seven elements*, are the constituents and causes of one human-nature, constantly in reciprocal activity to reach needed consequence. The personal kernel of *ódr*, is influenced by *önd*, the spirit, and also by the *animal*, *vegetative*, and *corporeal* elements; whereas the personality—being endowed with will—is also in a reciprocal interface. If the spirit becomes superior to the other elements, it then penetrates and purifies not only the kernel of ego, but also the animal, vegetative, and corporeal elements as well. Subsequently, human nature becomes *divine*, and deserves divine honors, driving *human* to *super human* and ***Godly Ancestry***...

The heathen concept is considerably more nuanced and comprehensive than that of the latter European christian concept of humans being composed of merely two unsophisticated elements (*e.g.*, the *corporeal body* and the *imperishable soul*). The Heathen concept embraces a multi-complex of elements<sup>2</sup>; some lower, which can or cannot exist with or without the others<sup>3</sup>, and those of the high, higher, and highest, that can exist and evolve—interdependently or independently—but always dynamically.

## FOOTNOTES:

1 the **Solarliod** (Stz 52) speaks expressly to the seven nether worlds of existence "...**without and within, I seemed to traverse all, the seven nether worlds...**"; in relation to these are a total of seven elements/gifts from the gods... Additionally, in similarly related tales found in **Hymiskviða**: the "eight kettles" occurring during Thor & Tyr's exploit (Stz 13); **Thrymskviða**: "full eight leagues deep the ground beneath" (Stz 8); **Lokasenna**: "thou winters eight was the earth beneath" (Stz 23); suggests an "eighth" level of existence/being beyond the earthly/mortal "seven?" Could this eighth state be the transition from life to the underworld?

2 the two lower inorganic & organic elements can cease to exist, as well as the third and fourth state of life-blood & animation; while the three higher elemental states can continue to maintain their existence so long as the fifth state (the *litr*) is in place, the higher (fifth and the sixth), and highest (seventh) may persist, continue & evolve (or devolve) regardless of (or in regard to) one-another.

3 ancient heathens, aware of this primal concept of existence, insisted upon their corporeal bodies—blood and flesh—being destroyed by water, exposure, fire, or inhumation (the primal elements of water, air, fire, earth)... They knew the importance of the inorganic material (skeletal) and its relation to the visage of godhood...